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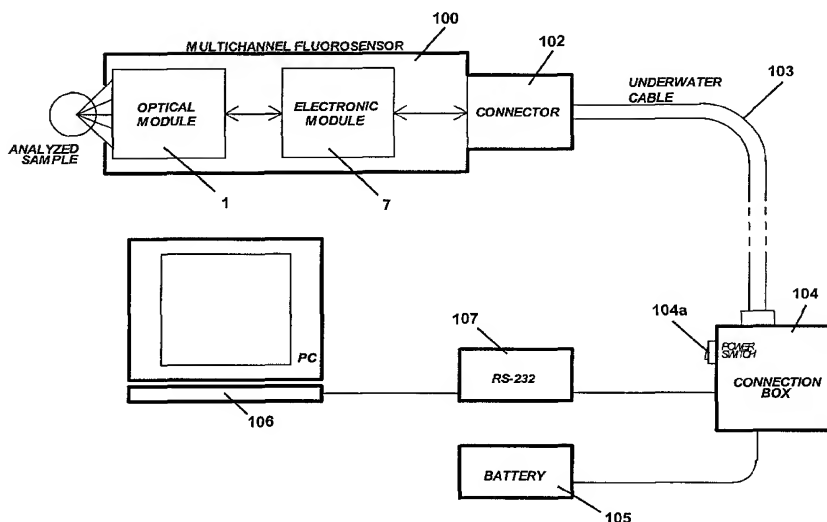
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(54) Title: MULTICHANNEL FLUOROSENSOR



(57) Abstract: A multichannel fluorosensor (100) includes an optical module (1) and an electronic module (7) combined in a water-tight housing (101) with an underwater connector (102). The fluorosensor (100) has an integral calibrator for periodical sensitivity validation of the fluorosensor (100). The optical module (1) has one or several excitation channels (5, 6) and one or several emission channels (3, 4) that use a mutual focusing system (2). To increase the efficiency of this mutual focusing system (2), the excitation and emission channels each have a micro-collimator made with one or more ball lenses (22). Each excitation channel has a light emitting diode and an optical filter. Each emission channel has a photodiode with a preamplifier and an optical filter. The electronic module (7) connects directly to the optical module (1) and includes a lock-in amplifier, a power supply and a controller with an A/D converter and a connector.



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MULTICHANNEL FLUOROSENSOR

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BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

1. TECHNICAL FIELD

[1] The invention relates generally to optical methods and apparatus for measuring fluorescent substances in liquids and more particularly to methods and devices for measuring the fluorescence of chlorophyll, dyes and optical backscatter in natural water or in different solvents.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

[2] *Chlorophyll a* is the most widely used indicator of algal biomass for the purposes of long-term monitoring and management programs, as well as short-term research studies. Its degradation products (i.e., *phaeophytin a* and *phaeophorbide a*) can be used to assess the physiological health of algae and its fluorescence properties can be related directly to *chlorophyll a* concentration. More recently, the biochemical/biophysical characteristics of the chlorophyll-fluorescence process have led to techniques, which in addition to more accurately estimating algal biomass, can almost instantaneously estimate the rate of algal photosynthesis (i.e., growth).

[3] Current laboratory analysis of *chlorophyll a* requires intensive processing. In-field or rapid laboratory filtration for pigment concentration and extraction, with organic solvents, is required. In recent years chromatographic procedures (HPLC) have been used to accurately resolve individual pigments. Nevertheless, these methods are expensive, difficult, and are limited in their availability from commercial laboratories, with this method used by a relatively few research groups. Furthermore, at present, there appears to be little potential for this technique to be used *in-situ*.

[4] The most commonly utilized *in-situ* technologies for *chlorophyll a* determination are spectrophotometric and fluorometric methods of analysis. However, these methods contain absolute accuracy limitations due to relatively poor optical design, causing low spectral resolution for *chlorophyll a*. Problematic to these device development efforts is that absorption and emission maxima for *chlorophylls b* and *c* are close to the peak of *chlorophyll a*, in the red region of the spectrum, allowing for errors to occur when these pigments constitute a significant proportion of the total chlorophyll content and correction for these interferences are not taken into account. Additional errors may be introduced by various accessory pigments and degradation products as well as humic acid and fulvic acid color, which also absorb and fluoresce at wavelengths similar to those for *chlorophyll a, b* and *c*, causing significant error when analyzed using broadband fluorescent techniques. In addition to accessory pigment interference, when utilizing broadband fluorometric analysis of photosynthetic pigments, significant error may also occur from optical backscatter (i.e., suspended inorganic and non-fluorescent organic particles). All of these interferences need to be taken into account during calibration and in the optical and electronic design of fluorometric probes. The claims as part of this present innovation describe a novel optical design that maybe utilized to increase the accuracy and specificity of fluorometric probes.

OBJECTS OF INVENTION

[5] It is an object of the present invention to improve the optical sensor for measuring of fluorescence and increasing of sensitivity.

[6] It is another object of the present invention to improve selectivity of the sensor to different fluorescent substances for example; *chlorophyll a*, *chlorophyll b*, *chlorophyll c*, that are simultaneously present in natural samples and to correct for interfering compounds, like optical backscatter, by direct measurement of these parameters.

[7] It is a further objective of the present invention to provide a novel method for a periodical calibration of the multichannel fluorosensor in the laboratory and for direct testing in the field during deployment at depth.

[8] Other objects and advantages of the present invention may be seen from the following detailed description.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[9] In accordance with present invention the multichannel fluorosensor includes an optical module and an electronic module combined in a watertight housing with an underwater connector. In some embodiments the multichannel fluorosensor has an integral calibrator for periodical sensitivity validation of the fluorosensor.

[10] The optical module has one or several excitation channels and one or several emission channels that use a mutual focusing system. To increase the efficiency of this mutual focusing system, each of the excitation and emission channels have a micro collimator made with one or several ball lenses. Each excitation channel has a light emitting diode and an optical filter and each emission channel has a photodiode with a preamplifier and an optical filter.

[11] The electronic module is connected directly to the optical module and includes a lock-in amplifier, a power supply and a controller with an analog-to-digital (A/D) converter and a RS-232 type connector.

[12] The calibrator provides a response, which is proportional to the excitation intensity and matches with spectral parameter of fluorescence for the analyzed fluorescent substance.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of the multichannel fluorosensor and its connection to a personal computer.

FIG. 2 is a schematic block diagram of the multichannel fluorosensor .

FIG. 3 is a schematic drawing of the optical module of the multichannel fluorosensor.

FIGs.4a - 4e are schematic drawings of other variants of the focusing systems for the optical module.

FIG. 5 is a graph showing typical fluorescence spectra of different chlorophyll constituencies in a 90% acetone solution.

FIG. 6 is a graph showing typical fluorescence spectra of chlorophyll from an algae sample in water and in 90% acetone solution.

FIG. 7 is a graph showing typical fluorescence spectra of ruby.

FIGs. 8a and 8b are schematic drawings of the chlorophyll calibrator with a ruby ball lens.

FIGs. 9a - 9d are schematic drawings of the chlorophyll calibrator with a photodiode and a LED chlorophyll imitator.

FIGs. 10a and 10b are schematic drawings of an automatic cleaning system for the multichannel fluorosensor with the built-in ruby calibrator.

FIGs. 11a and 11b are schematic drawings of an automatic cleaning system for the multichannel fluorosensor with the built-in LED calibrator.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[13] The block diagram of the multichannel fluorosensor is shown on the Fig. 1. The multichannel fluorosensor 100 according to the present invention, has a watertight housing 101 with a watertight connector matched with a cable connector 102 on a underwater cable 103. The multichannel fluorosensor includes an optical module 1 with excitation channels and emission channels and an electronic module 7 with analog and digital electronics. The underwater cable allows analysis of fluorescent samples in the body of water at depths and has a connection box 104 with a power switch 104a. The connection box is connected to a battery 105 and to a data processing device 106 through a port 107. That implementation of such components as the data processing device 106 and the port 107 may be of any conventional type known to those of skill in the art. For example, the data processing device may be a personal computer (PC), a handheld PC, a personal data assistant (PDA) or other device that can operate as a data receiving, manipulating and displaying terminal. The possible implementations of the port 107 include but are not limited to RS-232, analog, SDI 12, and RS-485 devices.

[14] The detailed diagram of the multichannel fluorosensor is shown on the Fig. 2. The multichannel fluorosensor has the optical module 1 with a focusing system 2, emission channels 3,4 with optical filters, photodiodes and preamplifiers, excitation channels 5,6 with optical filters and light emitting diodes (LEDs). The electronic module 7 includes lock-in amplifiers 8,9, generators 10 to modulate current through the light emitting diodes, temperature sensor 11, controller 12 having analog-to-digital converter (A/D) 13 to measure output signal of the emission channels and RS-232 device 14 to send data from the multichannel fluorosensor to the personal computer. The power supply 15 provides voltages

for analog and digital electronics. Optical and electronic modules are placed inside the watertight housing 16 having a watertight connector 17.

[15] The schematic drawing of the optical module is shown in Fig. 3, wherein cross-sectional views AA and BB illustrate the structure of the excitation and emission channels. The shown variant of the optical module has two excitation channels (Section BB) and two emission channels (Section AA) that use the mutual focusing system 2. The focusing system 2 consists of a positive lens divided by and mounted onto opaque inserts 18 so as to provide optical separation between the channels. The opaque inserts 18 are mounted onto the front plate 19 so as to fix the focusing system 2 on the front plate via, in one embodiment, cuts made into the surrounding portions of a mounting hole for the positive lens of the focusing system 2. The front plate 19 is connected with a filter holder 20 and housing 21 for LEDs and photodiodes. Those three parts are made as separate units and connected together (using, for example, screws) so as to form separate channels for the optical and electronic parts. Excitation and emission channels have micro collimators made of ball lenses 22. Optical filters 23a, 23b, 24a, 24b are installed to provide spectral selection for excitation and emission wavelengths of analyzed substances. O-rings 25a, 25b are used for protection against the direct penetration of the excitation light into the emission channels. O-ring 26 is covered with an organic solvent resistant material (for example, Teflon®) and installed on the front plate of the optical module. The excitation channels have light emitting diodes 27, and emission channels have photodiodes 28a, 28b with preamplifiers 29a, 29b and connectors 30a, 30b.

[16] Variants of the focusing systems are shown the Figs. 4a - 4e. The focusing systems with six, eight and nine channels (Figs. 4a, b, c) are shown as examples of lens focusing systems that may be implemented in the present invention. The positive lens 31 is glued into the front plate 19 and divided to form several separate optical channels separated by opaque inserts 18. Prismatic focusing systems shown at in Figs. 4d and 4e are made of prismatic wedges 32 glued into the front plate of the optical module and cut to form several separate optical channels divided by opaque inserts 18. The cuts for the opaque inserts 18 should be deeper than thickness of the positive lens 31 or prismatic wedge 32 to provide total optical separation for optical channels. The optical design according to the present invention provides a number of optical channels focused at the same small volume because they are parts of the same positive lens 31 or prismatic wedge 32.

[17] In another variation of the mutual focusing system, the separated optical channels are formed via at least two cylindrical holes tilted relative to the front plate and covered with optical filters therein such that the optical filters serve as windows. To optimize performance, the optical filters are installed to have an angle of incidence lower than 80°.

[18] The number of excitation and emission channels can be different when different components in a liquid composition need to be analyzed. Optimal spectral ranges for optical filters used in the multichannel fluorometer should be chosen after analyzing the fluorescent spectra of the components to provide the best sensitivity and selectivity. For example: *chlorophyll a* (*Chl a*), *chlorophyll b* (*Chl b*), *chlorophyll c* (*Chl c*), that are simultaneously present in samples could be measured separately using the difference in their excitation and emission spectra. Fig. 5 represents typical fluorescence spectra of different chlorophyll modification in 90% acetone solution, where E represents the excitation spectra and F represents the emission spectra. Optimal optical filters and recommended LEDs are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Optimal optical filters and LEDs for measuring the different Chlorophyll modification after extraction in the 90% acetone

Measured component	Excitation filter	Emission filter	Max LED emission	Type of LED
<i>Chl a</i>	415nm-440nm	665nm-680nm	420nm-435nm	Jameco 137613
<i>Chl b</i>	455nm-475nm	645nm-665nm	450nm-475nm	MPJ 3900 mcd
<i>Chl c</i>	435nm-455nm	625nm-645nm	435nm-455nm	Panasonic P389

[19] Another application of the multichannel fluorometer according to the present invention is the monitoring of *chlorophyll a* concentration in the body of water without sample preparation or *chlorophyll a* extraction. There are some differences in the optical design for such application because of different fluorescence spectra for extracted chlorophyll and for the living chlorophyll in-situ. Typical fluorescence spectra of chlorophyll from an algae sample in water and in 90% acetone solution are shown on the Fig. 6. The optimal emission filter for *chlorophyll a* in water would have a transmission band from 660nm to 740nm.

[20] A significant error may occur from an optical backscatter (i.e., suspended inorganic and non-fluorescent organic particles). The backscattered excitation light not fully blocked by an emission filter gives a signal that is proportional to the particulate scatter from non-chlorophyll substances of the sample. Optical backscatter signal correction can be done by adding an optical backscatter channel in the multichannel fluorometer and subtracting the signal proportional to the optical back scatter from the signal of the fluorescent channel. The optical back scatter channel is built using a photodiode and emission filter with transmission in the transmission range of the excitation filter for the chlorophyll channel. Turbidity of the water sample can be also measured using an infrared method close to the recommendation of the International Standard ISO 7027 "Water Quality – Determination of Turbidity". According the ISO 7027, turbidity should be measured by measuring the scattered radiation at the wavelength 860 nm with bandwidth 60nm. The multichannel fluorometer in at least embodiment has an excitation channel with an infrared GaAlAs LED having maximum emission at the wavelengths from 840 nm to 880 nm and emission channel with a GaAlAs photodiode having maximum sensitivity at the wavelengths from 840 nm to 880 nm. It is possible to use other LEDs and photodiodes with the appropriate band optical filters.

[21] If the multichannel fluorosensor has an optical backscatter channel for turbidity measurements and turbidity correction it should be calibrated using a standard sample with known turbidity. The NIST traceable turbidity standard from APS Analytical Standards Inc. Redwood City, CA may be used, for example.

[22] The multichannel fluorosensor according the present invention should be calibrated using solutions with known concentration of the chlorophyll. Methods of verifying the chlorophyll concentration in water samples are described in the following references, both of which are hereby incorporated herein by reference:

Standard Methods For The Examination Of Water And Wastewater, American Public Health Association. 1989, 17th ed. American Public Health Association, Washington D.C.

Measuring Chlorophyll and Phaeophytin: Whom Should you Believe?, Axler, R.P. and C.J. Owen. 1994, Lake and Reservoir. Management, 8(2): 143-151.

[23] The calibration validation of the multichannel fluorosensor can be done using a Rhodamine solution as a surrogate standard of fluorescence. The present inventions includes the use of a solid state calibrator for periodically testing the calibration of the multichannel fluorosensor. The calibrator according the present invention comprises a holder with one or several solid-state fluorescent elements. Fig. 7 shows typical fluorescence spectra of ruby. The fluorescent spectra of ruby begins at 650 nm, has a maximum near 690 nm and a broad band from 700 nm to 750 nm. The total distribution of fluorescent spectra of ruby is closer to the distribution of the fluorescent spectra of chlorophyll than the very broad band fluorescence of Rhodamine. The life time of Rhodamine standards is very limited contrary to unlimited life time for ruby standards.

[24] Some embodiments of the chlorophyll calibrator with ruby according the present invention are shown in Figs. 8a and 8b. The solid state calibrator with ruby ball lens (Fig. 8a) comprises holder 34 with the ruby ball lens 35 mounted at the adjustable disk holder 36. Window filter 37 is made of colored glass and placed in front of ruby ball lens for protection.

[25] Another embodiment of the chlorophyll calibrator is shown on the Fig. 8b. Holder 34 has an epoxy disk 38 filled with ruby powder. Concentration of the ruby powder in the epoxy can be chosen to give a fluorescent response corresponding the specific chlorophyll concentration.

[26] As described above, chlorophyll calibrators with a ruby ball lens or ruby powder filled epoxy are very stable and convenient in use. They work as a passive device that converts the light from the excitation channel into the emission channel by changing its spectral range to one similar to the spectral range of chlorophyll.

[27] The active chlorophyll calibrator with photodetectors and a LED is shown at the Fig. 9a. It has the holder 39 with the window 40 and adjustable disk holder 45 carrying photodetectors 41, LED 42 and battery 43. A switch 44 is on the front surface of calibrator therein switch can be turned automatically ON when the multichannel fluorosensor is put on for calibration.

[28] There are several variants of electronic schematics for the chlorophyll calibrator with photodetectors and LEDs according to present invention. Fig. 9b shows schematics which includes LED 42, battery 43, switch 44, phototransistor 46 and current limiting resistor 47. Said calibrator allows a user to regulate the readings generated when the multichannel fluorosensor is put in for calibration.

[29] Fig. 9c shows schematic that allows to have several points of calibration. It includes LED 42, battery 43, switch 44, phototransistor 46, multiposition switch 48 and several adjustable resistors 49. This calibrator has several points of calibration, independently adjustable, to check calibration in the full range of operation of the multichannel fluorosensor.

[30] Fig. 9d shows a schematic that includes several photodiodes 50 connected in series to receive a photocurrent passing through the LED 42. Resistor 47 works as a current limiting resistor. There is no battery needed. Said photodiodes can be segments of the multi element photodiode connected in series.

[31] Though Figs. 9a - 9d illustrates implementations for the chlorophyll calibrators using photodetectors and LEDs, one of skill in the art given this disclosure of the present invention would understand that the above-mentioned implementations are but one way of achieving that component of the present invention and that there exist other optical, electromagnetic, infra-red, ultraviolet, microwave, RF or other energy transmission/detection systems that would be consistent with the present invention.

[32] Optics for the multichannel fluorosensor can be contaminated during operation because of biofouling or deposition of impurities. Fig.10a shows the multichannel fluorosensor 33 with the focusing system 2 having an automatic cleaning system 51 which has an open position and a closed position. The open automatic cleaning system position allows normal operation of the multichannel fluorosensor. The closed automatic cleaning system position 52 (shown with dotted line) protects focusing system from contamination while not in operation. According to the present invention the automatic cleaning system can be combined with a passive or active calibrator. Fig. 10b shows a automatic cleaning system for multichannel fluorosensor with the built-in ruby calibrator. Automatic cleaning system 51 actuated by rotating shaft 53 has a window 54 surrounded by soft protector 55 preventing the window from scratching during rotation. Said soft protector acts as cleaning agent during rotation and as sealing member covering the focusing system area while the multichannel fluorosensor is not in operation. There is a ruby ball lens mounted inside the automatic cleaning system after the window 54. When automatic cleaning system is in the closed position the ruby calibrator is centered in front of focusing system. This position allows the sensor calibration to be checked.

[33] Fig. 11 shows an automatic cleaning system for the multichannel fluorosensor with a built-in LED calibrator. The focusing system 2 at the front end of multichannel fluorosensor 33 can be open for measurements when the automatic cleaning system 51 is in the open position or it can be covered and protected when the automatic cleaning system is in the closed position 52. The automatic cleaning system 51 actuated by rotating shaft 53 has a window 54 surrounded by soft protector 55. The window 54 covers a compartment with photodiodes 57 and LED 58. The open automatic cleaning system position allows normal operation of the multichannel fluorosensor. In the closed position of the automatic cleaning system, the switch 59 turns the electronics ON. The LED calibrator in this position is in front of the focusing system and sensor calibration can be verified. The switch 59 is a double action switch; to turn the electronics OFF, the calibrator should make one turn therein so as to press the switch 59 a second time. Battery 60 supplies power to the electronics. It is in a watertight compartment covered with a watertight lead 61.

[34] The operation of the multichannel fluorosensor will be described hereinbelow using as an example of the multichannel fluorosensor with optical backscatter compensation for measuring the concentration of *chlorophyll a* in water. The multichannel fluorosensor, in this embodiment, has two identical excitation channels having light emitting diodes (LED) with a maximum emission between 430nm and 480nm and excitation optical filters with a transmission band from 410nm to 490nm. A first emission channel has a photodiode and

optical filter with a transmission band from 660nm to 740nm and second emission channel has a photodiode and a optical filter having a transmission band from 430nm to 480nm.

[35] Using two identical excitation channels two times increases the signal-to-noise ratio. The emission channel having transmission band from 660nm to 740nm measures the fluorescence signal from chlorophyll *a* in water. The emission channel having a transmission band from 430nm to 480nm measures the intensity of the scattered light which is proportional to the optical backscatter from non-chlorophyll particulate matter in the water sample. Optical backscatter from non-chlorophyll particulates generates a signal that is used for correction of the fluorescent signal to exclude the constituent of the fluorescent signal due to back-scattered signal from turbidity. There are two ball lenses in each of the emission and excitation channels to collimate light from the LEDs and to direct light from the focusing system to the photodiodes. The LEDs receive pulse current from the generators 10 (see Fig.2) and emit light pulses in the blue spectral range. In each excitation channel (see Fig.3), light from LED 27 passes through the excitation filter 24 then through two ball lenses 22 and through a segment of focusing system 2 limited by appropriate opaque inserts 18. All segments of the focusing system 2 are the parts of the same lens therefore all excitation and emission channels are precisely focused at the same small volume in front of the focusing system. The fluorescence of substances in this small volume is delivered to photodiodes with high optical efficiency. The first emission channel delivers to the first photodiode 28a the fluorescent signal proportional to the *chlorophyll a* concentration. The second emission channel delivers to second photodiode 28b a scattered signal proportional to the optical backscatter water sample. Preamplifiers 29a and 29b amplify pulsed photocurrents from photodiodes and send pulsed voltage signals to the lock-in amplifiers 8 and 9 (see Fig.2). Output signals from said lock-in amplifiers and from temperature sensor 11 connected to the inputs of the analog-to-digital converter (A/D) 13. Temperature measurements and temperature correction are very substantial because the fluorescence yield of chlorophyll shows significant variations with variations of temperature.

[36] Other example implementations of the multichannel fluorosensor include one system that incorporates at least one excitation channel includes two light emitting diodes (LEDs) and excitation optical filters, and the at least one emission channel includes two photodiodes and emission optical filters. A first of the LEDs has a maximum emission between 420nm and 440nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 410nm to 450nm, a second of the LEDs has a maximum emission between 370nm and 380nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 360nm to 390nm, a first of the emission optical filters has a transmission band from 670nm to 690nm, and a second of the emission optical filters has a transmission band with a half bandwidth from 410nm to 450nm

[37] In another implementation, the multichannel fluorosensor incorporates at least one excitation channel that includes three light emitting diodes (LEDs) and excitation optical filters, and at least one emission channel that includes two photodiodes and emission optical filters. A first of the LEDs has a maximum emission between 420nm and 435nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 415nm to 440nm, a second of the LEDs has a maximum emission between 440nm and 475nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 435nm to 455nm, a third of the LEDs has a maximum emission between 450nm and 475nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 450nm to 475nm, a first of the emission optical filters has a transmission band from 625nm to 645nm, a second of the emission optical filters has a transmission band from

645nm to 665nm, and a third of the emission optical filters has a transmission band with a half bandwidth from 665nm to 680nm

[38] In a further implementation, the multichannel fluorosensor is formed to incorporate at least one excitation channel that includes two light emitting diodes (LEDs) and excitation optical filters, and at least one emission channel that includes two photodiodes and emission optical filters. A first of the LEDs has a maximum emission between 430nm and 480nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 410nm to 490nm, a second of the LEDs has a maximum emission between 840nm and 880nm, a first of the emission channels has an optical filter with a transmission band from 660nm to 740nm, and a second of the emission channels has a photodiode with a maximum sensitivity from 840nm to 880nm.

[39] Voltages measured by the A/D converter 13 can be converted into actual chlorophyll, temperature, and turbidity readings according to the following equations:

$$\text{Temperature}(\text{°C}) = 54 \times (V_t^{\text{Temp}} - 0.325)$$

$$\text{Turbidity(NTU)} = 74.6 \times (V_t^{\text{Turb}} - V_0^{\text{Turb}})$$

$$\text{Chl } a(\text{ppb}) = K \times [(V_t^{\text{Chl}} - V_0^{\text{Chl}}) - 0.004 \times (V_t^{\text{Turb}} - V_0^{\text{Turb}})] \times [1 + 0.011 \times (\text{Temperature}(\text{°C}) - 20)]$$

where

V_t^{Temp} = the voltage from the temperature channel,

V_t^{Turb} = the voltage from turbidity channel,

V_0^{Turb} = the voltage from turbidity channel at zero (0) NTU,

V_t^{Chl} = the voltage from chlorophyll channel,

V_0^{Chl} = the voltage from chlorophyll channel at zero (0) ppb,

K = a calibration constant equals 170 for *chlorophyll a* in water.

[40] Calibration coefficients in the equations above represent just a example of calibration for a specific multichannel fluorosensor optimized for measuring *chlorophyll a* in water with correction of signal variation due to temperature variation and turbidity correction.

[41] Although the present invention has been fully described in connection with the preferred embodiment thereof with reference to the accompanying drawings, it is to be noted that various changes and modifications are apparent to those skilled in the art. Such changes and modifications are to be understood as included within the scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims, unless they depart therefrom.

What is claimed is:

1. A multichannel fluorosensor for measuring fluorescent substances in liquids comprising:
 - a watertight housing,
 - an optical module with at least one excitation channel and at least one emission channel operatively connected to a mutual focusing system, and
 - an electronic module with a watertight connector, wherein the connector operatively connected to a cable connector on an underwater cable which connects said multichannel fluorosensor to a power supply and an indicating device or computer.
2. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 1, wherein said optical module and electronic module combined in a mounting rack having a front plate with a groove for an O-ring on one side and a connector holder with a groove for an O-ring on the other side of the said mounting rack, wherein the O-rings together with said watertight housing provides protection for the sensor against outside water.
3. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 2, wherein at least one of said O-rings is at least one of made of and covered with a corrosion-resistant material, and said housing and mutual focusing system are made of organic solvent resistant materials therein so as to allow direct immersion in an organic solvent based calibration solution.
4. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 1, further comprising:
 - a front plate having said mutual focusing system operatively connected thereto including separated optical channels.
5. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 4, wherein said mutual focusing system with the separated optical channels consists of a plano-convex lens having a plurality of channel portions with an opaque insert therebetween so as to provide optical separation between each of the channel portions.
6. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 5, wherein said separated optical channels of said mutual focusing system are formed by a plurality of wedge prisms fixedly mounted onto said front plate with opaque inserts therebetween with a maximum thickness of each wedge prism being positioned toward a center point between said wedge prisms.
7. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 1, wherein said at least one excitation channel includes at least one light emitting diode (LED) and excitation optical filter, and said at least one emission channel includes at least one photodiode and emission optical filter.
8. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 7, wherein said at least one of said excitation channel and said emission channel includes a collimator between said excitation optical filter or said emission optical filter, respectively, and said mutual focusing system.

9. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 8, wherein said collimator includes at least one ball lens.
10. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 8, wherein said collimator includes at least one micro rod lens.
11. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 8, wherein said collimator includes at least one micro half-ball lens.
12. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 8, wherein said collimator includes at least one drum lens.
13. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 7, wherein said at least one excitation channel includes two light emitting diodes (LEDs) and excitation optical filters, and said at least one emission channel includes two photodiodes and emission optical filters, said LEDs each having a maximum emission between 430nm and 480nm with said excitation optical filters having a transmission band from 410nm to 490nm, a first of said emission optical filters having a transmission band from 660nm to 740nm and a second of said emission optical filters having a transmission band from 410nm to 490nm .
14. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 7, wherein said at least one excitation channel includes two light emitting diodes (LEDs) and excitation optical filters, and said at least one emission channel includes two photodiodes and emission optical filters, a first of said LEDs having a maximum emission between 420nm and 440nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 410nm to 450nm, a second of said LEDs having a maximum emission between 370nm and 380nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 360nm to 390nm, a first of said emission optical filters having a transmission band from 670nm to 690nm and a second of said emission optical filters having a transmission band with a half bandwidth from 410nm to 450nm
15. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 7, wherein said at least one excitation channel includes three light emitting diodes (LEDs) and excitation optical filters, and said at least one emission channel includes two photodiodes and emission optical filters, a first of said LEDs having a maximum emission between 420nm and 435nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 415nm to 440nm, a second of said LEDs having a maximum emission between 440nm and 475nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 435nm to 455nm, a third of said LEDs having a maximum emission between 450nm and 475nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 450nm to 475nm, a first of said emission optical filters having a transmission band from 625nm to 645nm, a second of said emission optical filters having a transmission band from 645nm to 665nm and a third of said emission optical filters having a transmission band with a half bandwidth from 665nm to 680nm
16. The multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 7, wherein said at least one excitation channel includes two light emitting diodes (LEDs) and excitation optical filters, and said at least one emission channel includes two photodiodes and emission optical filters, a first of said LEDs having a maximum emission between 430nm and

480nm with an excitation optical filter having a transmission band from 410nm to 490nm, a second of said LEDs having a maximum emission between 840nm and 880nm, a first of said emission channels having an optical filter with a transmission band from 660nm to 740nm and a second of said emission channels having a photodiode with a maximum sensitivity from 840nm to 880nm.

17. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor comprising a holder with at least one solid-state fluorescent element.
18. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 17, wherein said solid-state fluorescent element is a ruby ball lens.
19. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 17, wherein said solid-state fluorescent element is an epoxy disk filed with a ruby powder.
20. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 17, further comprising a window in front of said at least one solid-state fluorescent element.
21. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 20, wherein said window includes a blue glass filter.
22. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 20, wherein said window includes a neutral density glass filter.
23. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor, comprising a holder with at least one window, at least one photo detector and at least one light emitting diode (LED).
24. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 23, wherein said photodetector is a phototransistor.
25. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 23, further comprising a battery and a switch.
26. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 25 wherein said switch includes a multi-position switch and at least one current limiting device.
27. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 26, wherein said current limiting device includes at least one adjustable resistor.
28. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 23, wherein said photodetector is at least one photodiode.
29. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 28, wherein said photodetector includes a multi-element photodiode connected in series.
30. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 29, wherein said photodetector further includes a plurality of silicon photodiodes connected in series so as to apply photocurrent to said LED in a forward direction..
31. A multichannel fluorosensor for measuring fluorescent substances in liquids, comprising:

a water tight housing;

an optical module with at least one excitation channel, at least one emission channel and a mutual focusing system operatively positioned with said excitation and

emission channels, said optical module having a movable automatic cleaning system for protection said mutual focusing system during non-use;

an electronic module with a water tight connector means for communicatively connecting said electronic module to at least one of a power supply and a data processing device for receiving data from said electronic module.

32. A multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 31, wherein said movable automatic cleaning system has a built-in calibrator having at least one solid-state fluorescent element.
33. A multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 32, wherein said solid-state fluorescent element is a ruby ball lens.
34. A multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 31, wherein said movable automatic cleaning system has a built-in calibrator including a holder with at least one window, at least one photo detector and at least one light emitting diode (LED).
35. A multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 34, wherein said photodetector is a phototransistor.
36. A multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 35, further comprising a battery and a control switch.
37. A multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 36, wherein said control switch includes a multi-position switch with a current limiting device.
38. A multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 37, wherein said current limiting device includes at least one adjustable resistor.
39. A multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 34, wherein said photodetector is a photodiode.
40. A multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 39, wherein said photodetector includes a multi-element photodiode connected in series.
41. A calibrator for a multichannel fluorosensor according to claim 40, wherein said photodetector further includes a plurality of silicon photodiodes connected in series so as to apply photocurrent to said LED in a forward direction..
42. The multichannel fluorosensor of claim 4 wherein said mutual focusing system with the separated optical channels includes at least two cylindrical holes tilted relative to the front plate and covered with optical filters therein such that said optical filters serve as windows.
43. The multichannel fluorosensor of claim 42 wherein said optical filters are installed to have an angle of incidence lower than 80°.

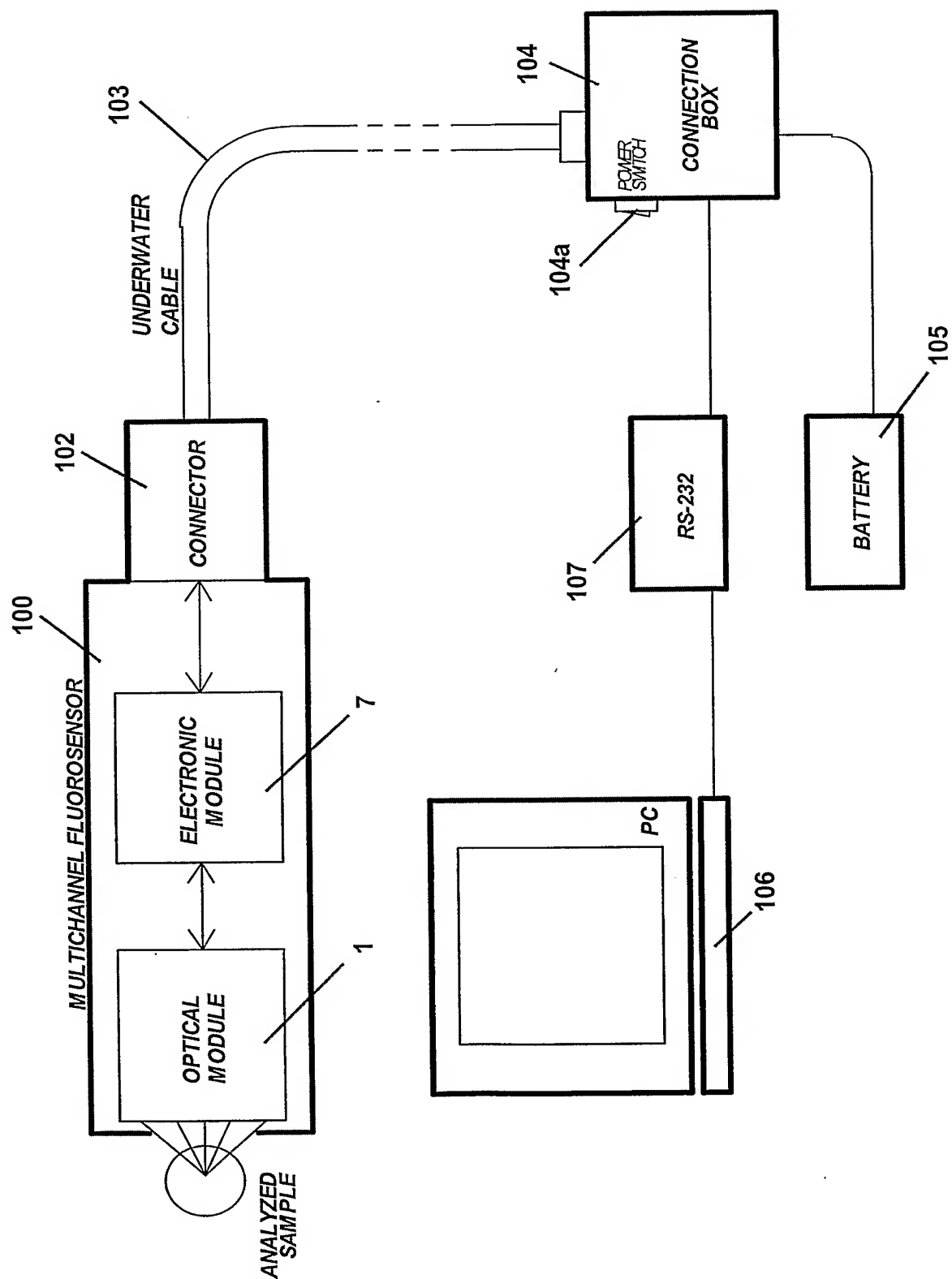


FIG. 1

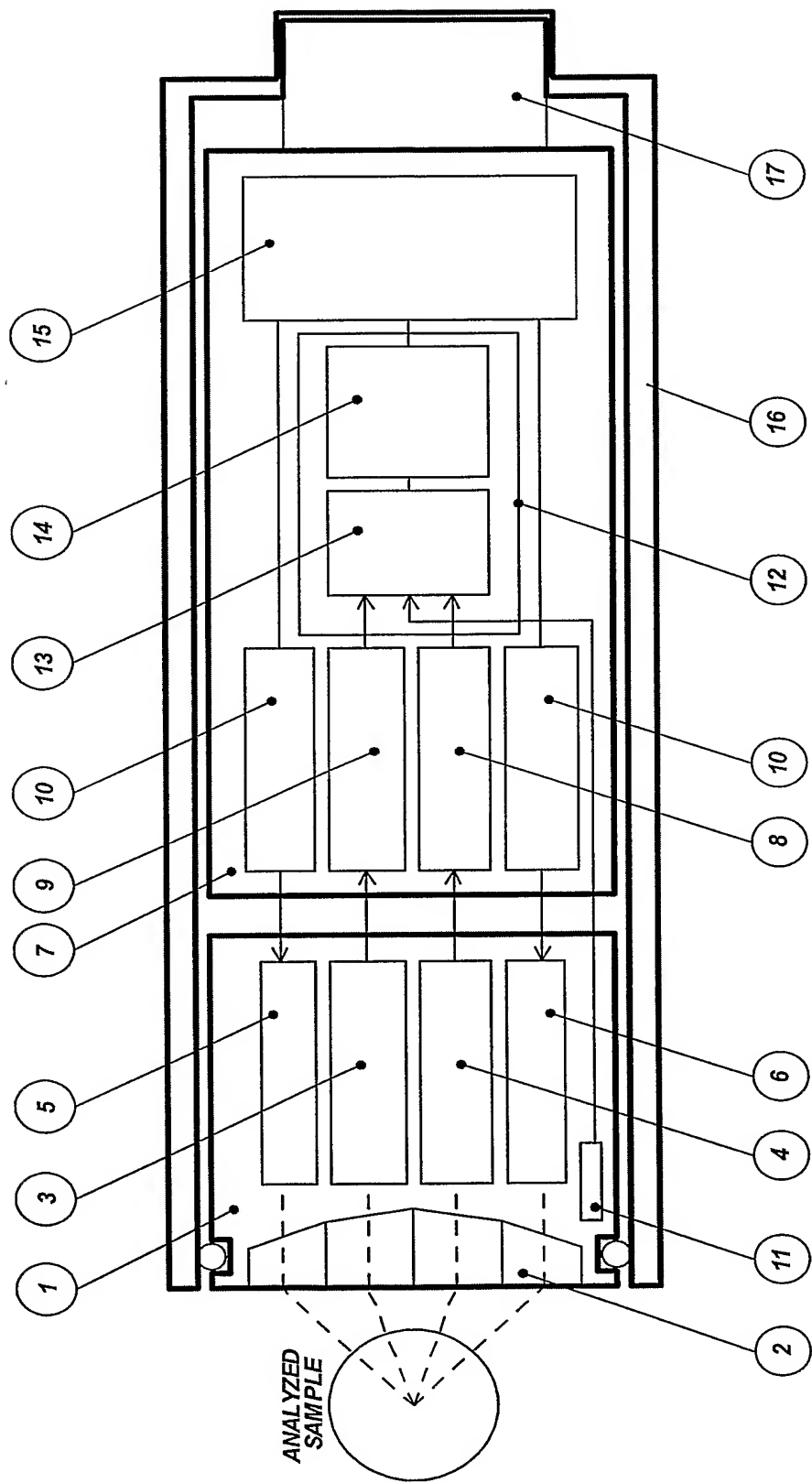


FIG. 2

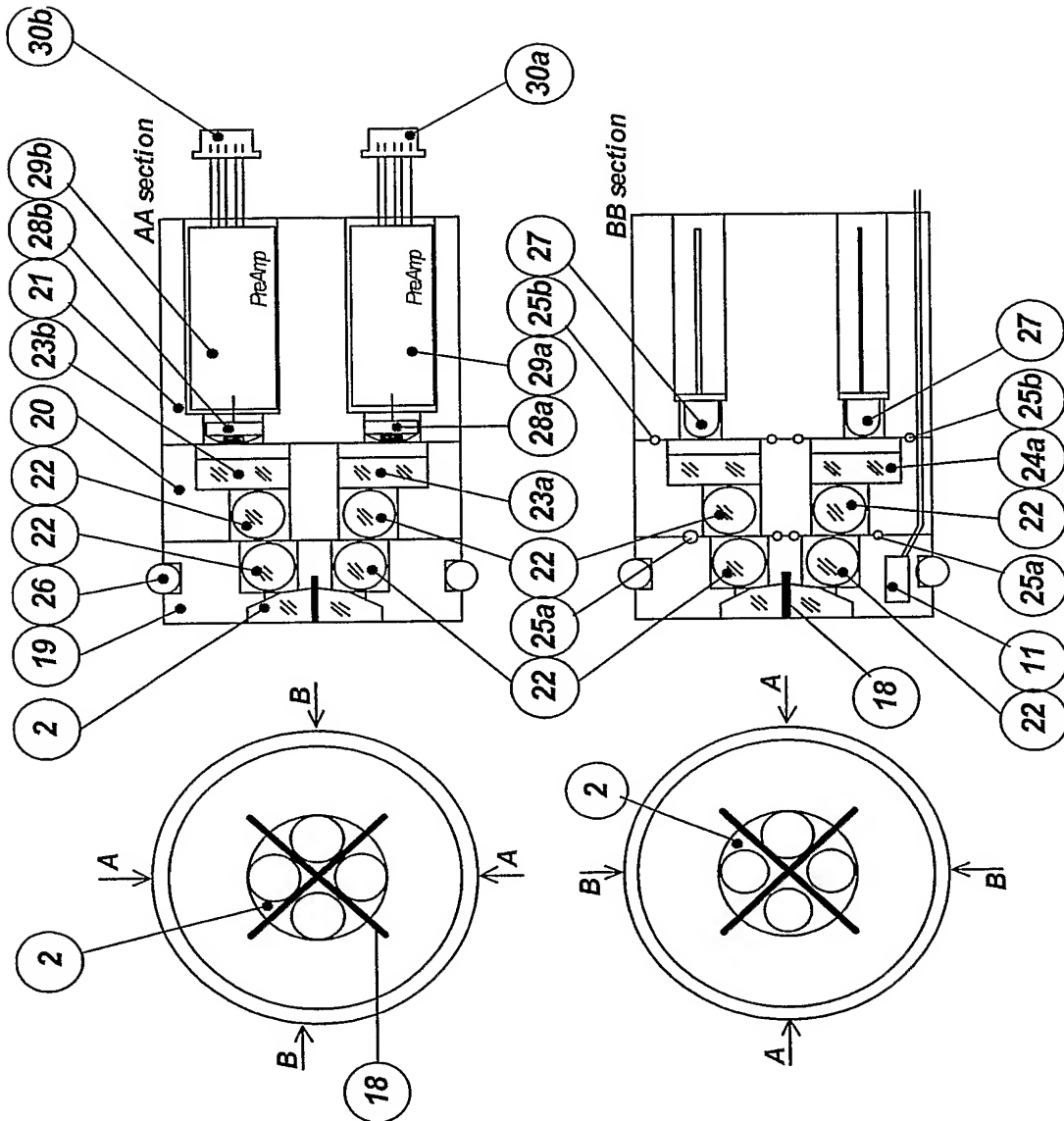
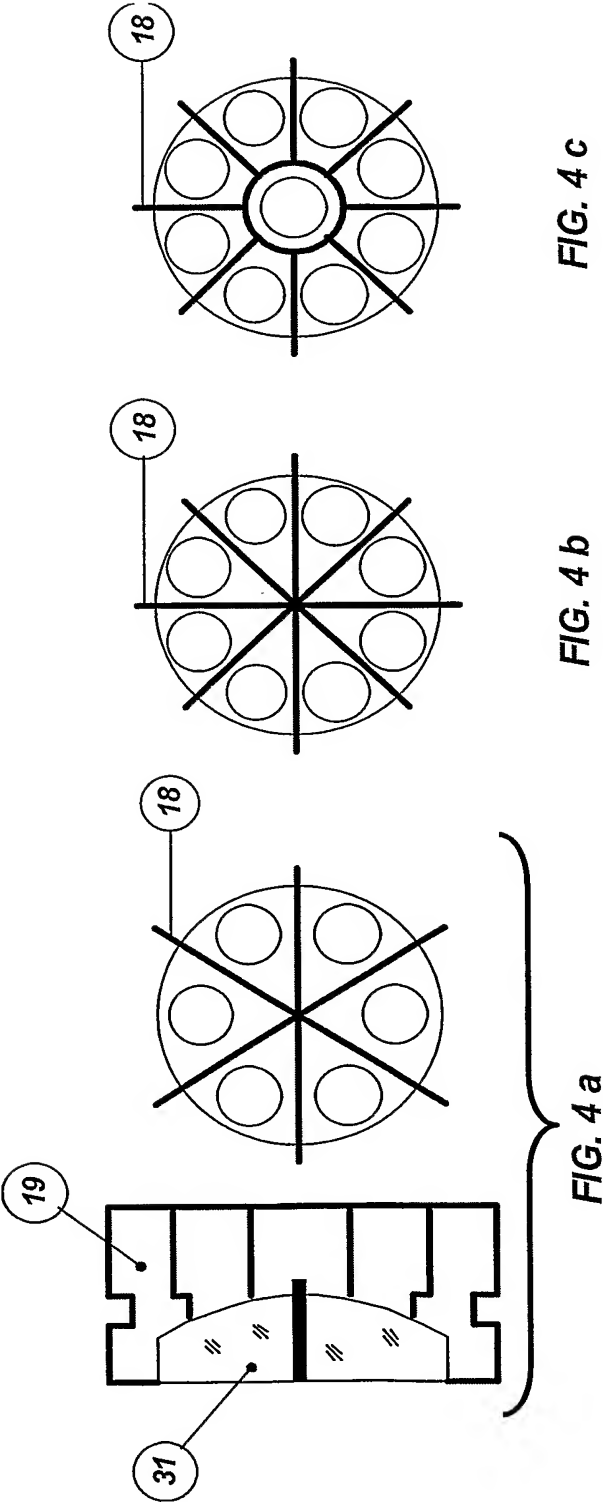


FIG. 3



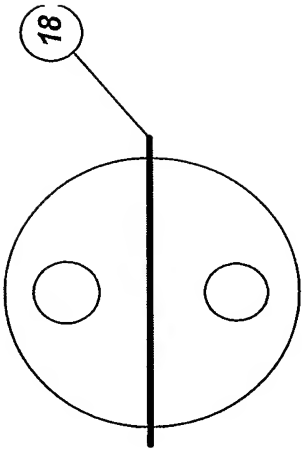
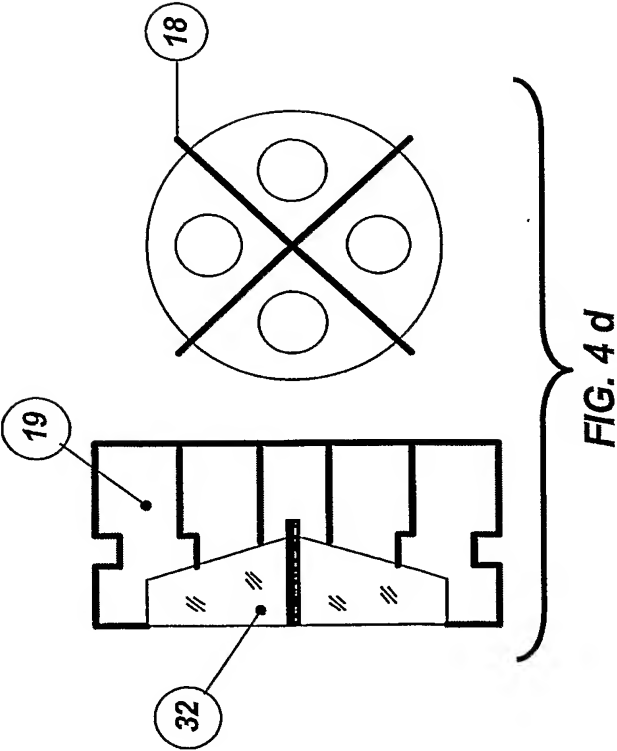


FIG. 4 e

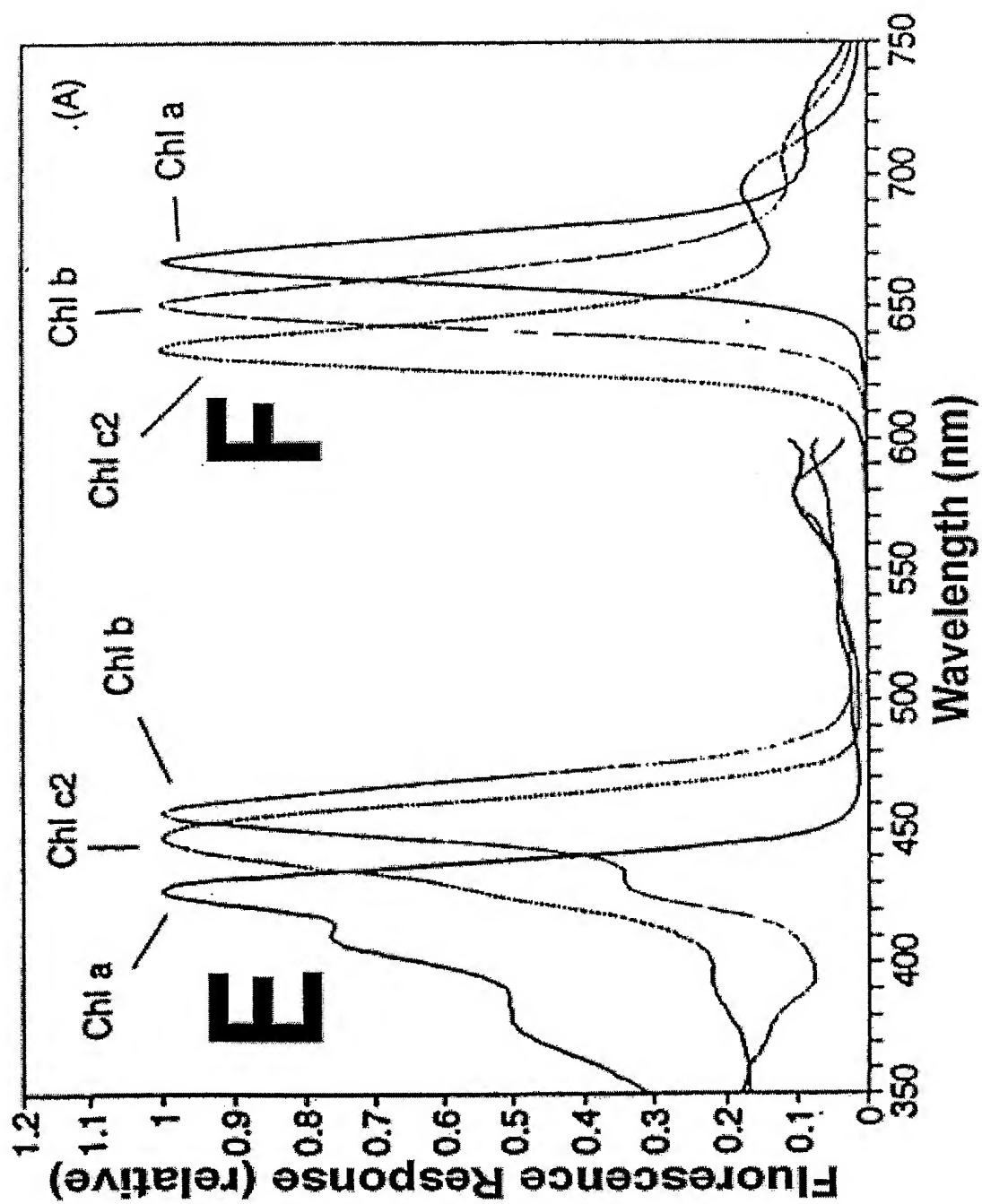
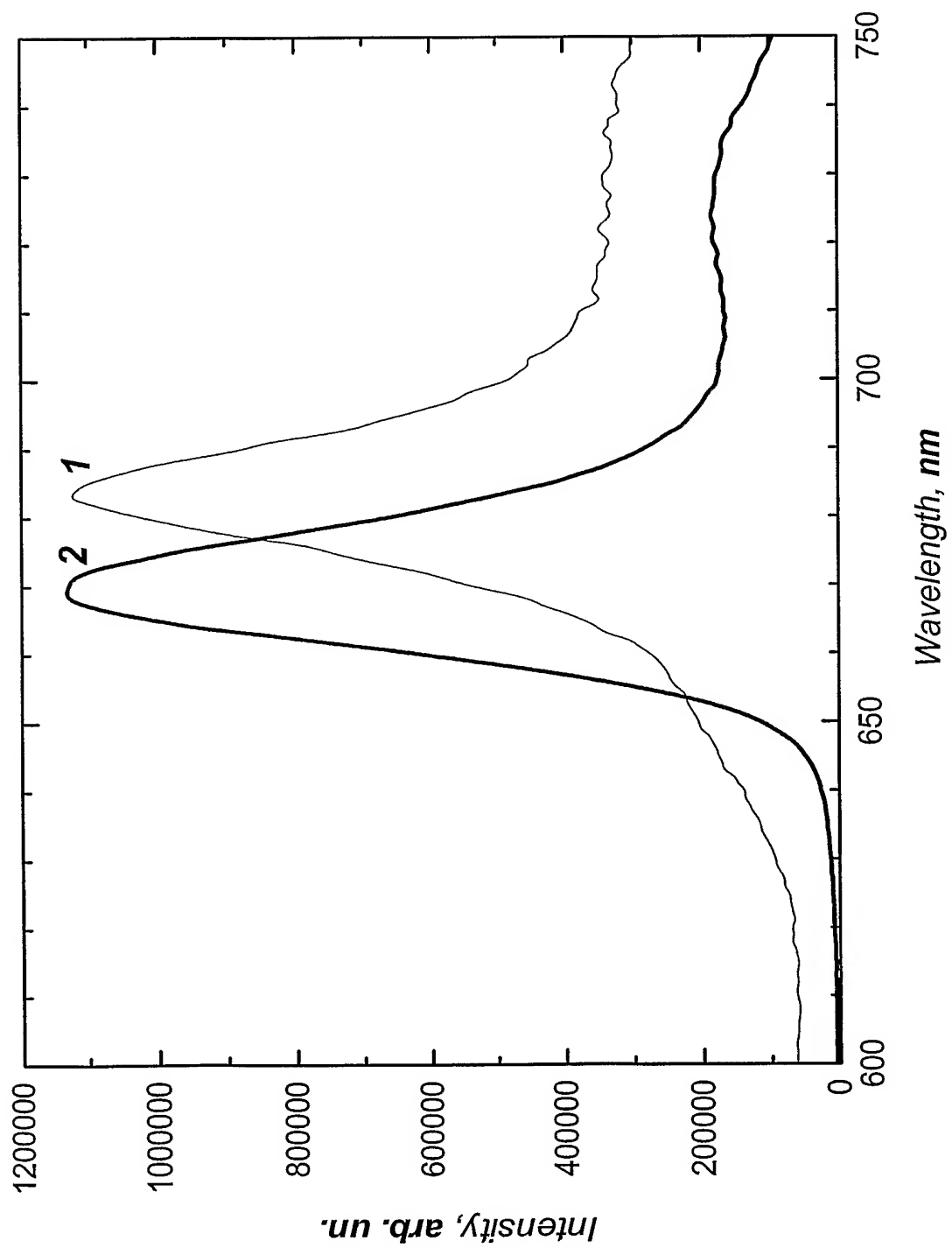
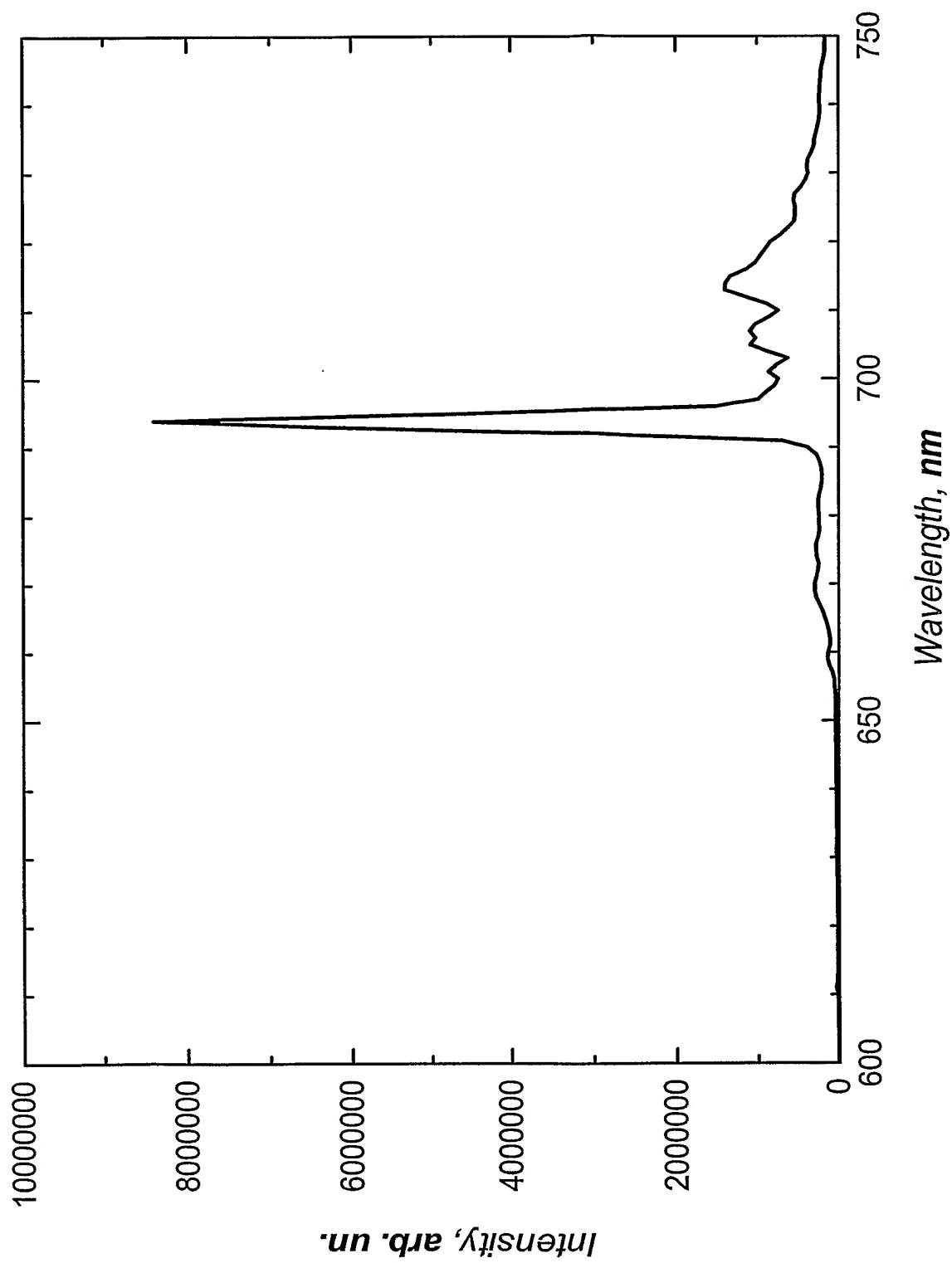


FIG 5.

**FIG. 6**



Wavelength, nm
FIG. 7

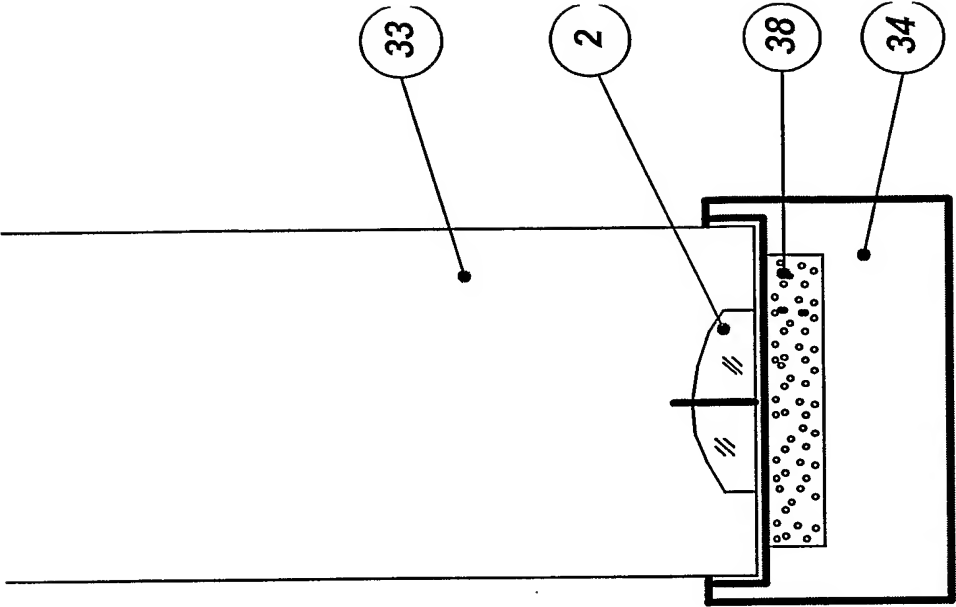


FIG. 8b

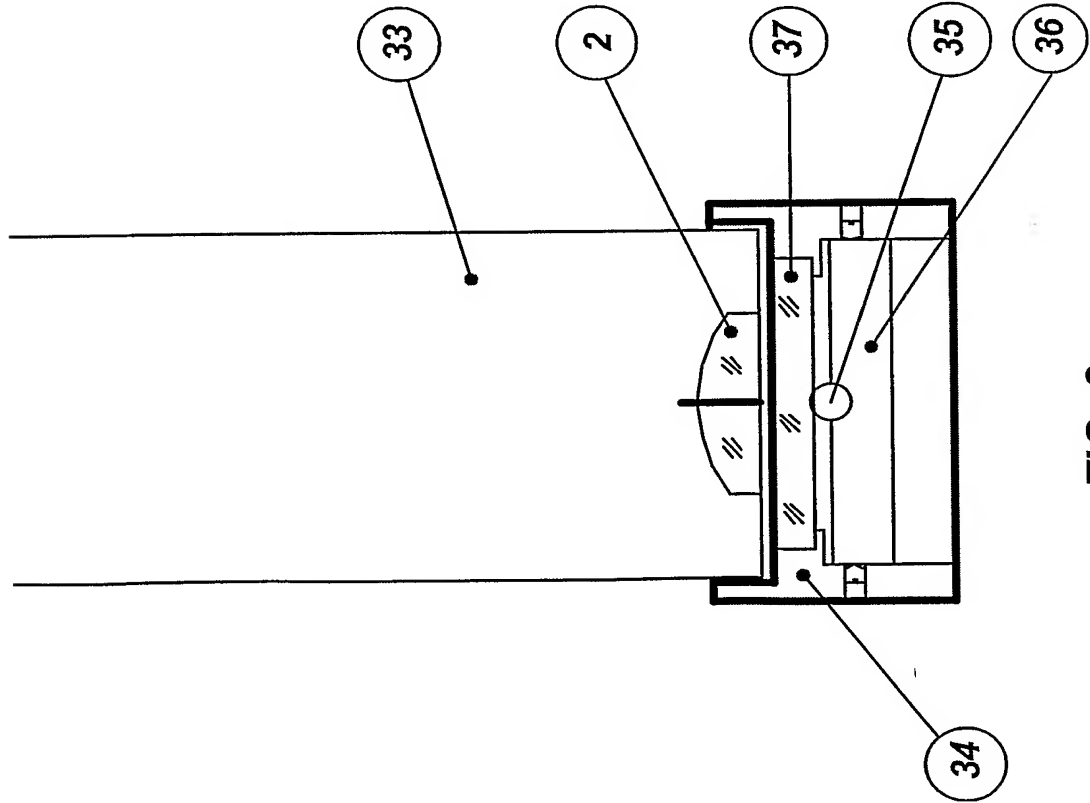


FIG. 8 a

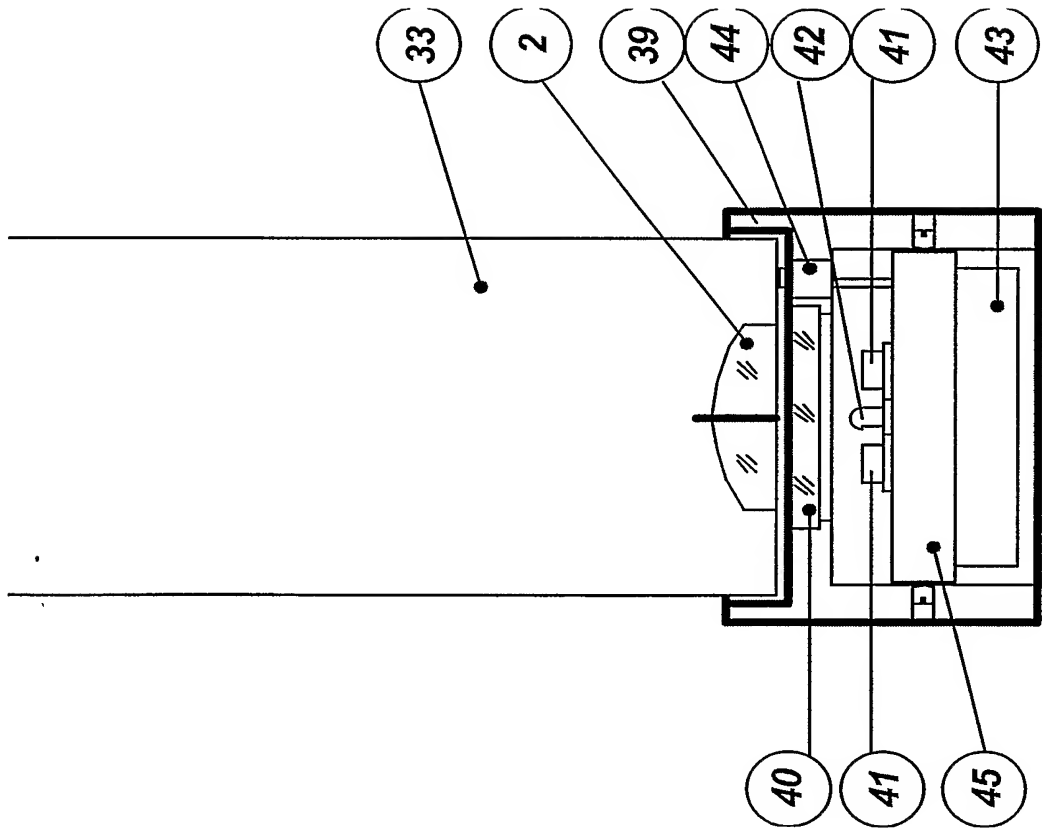


FIG. 9 a

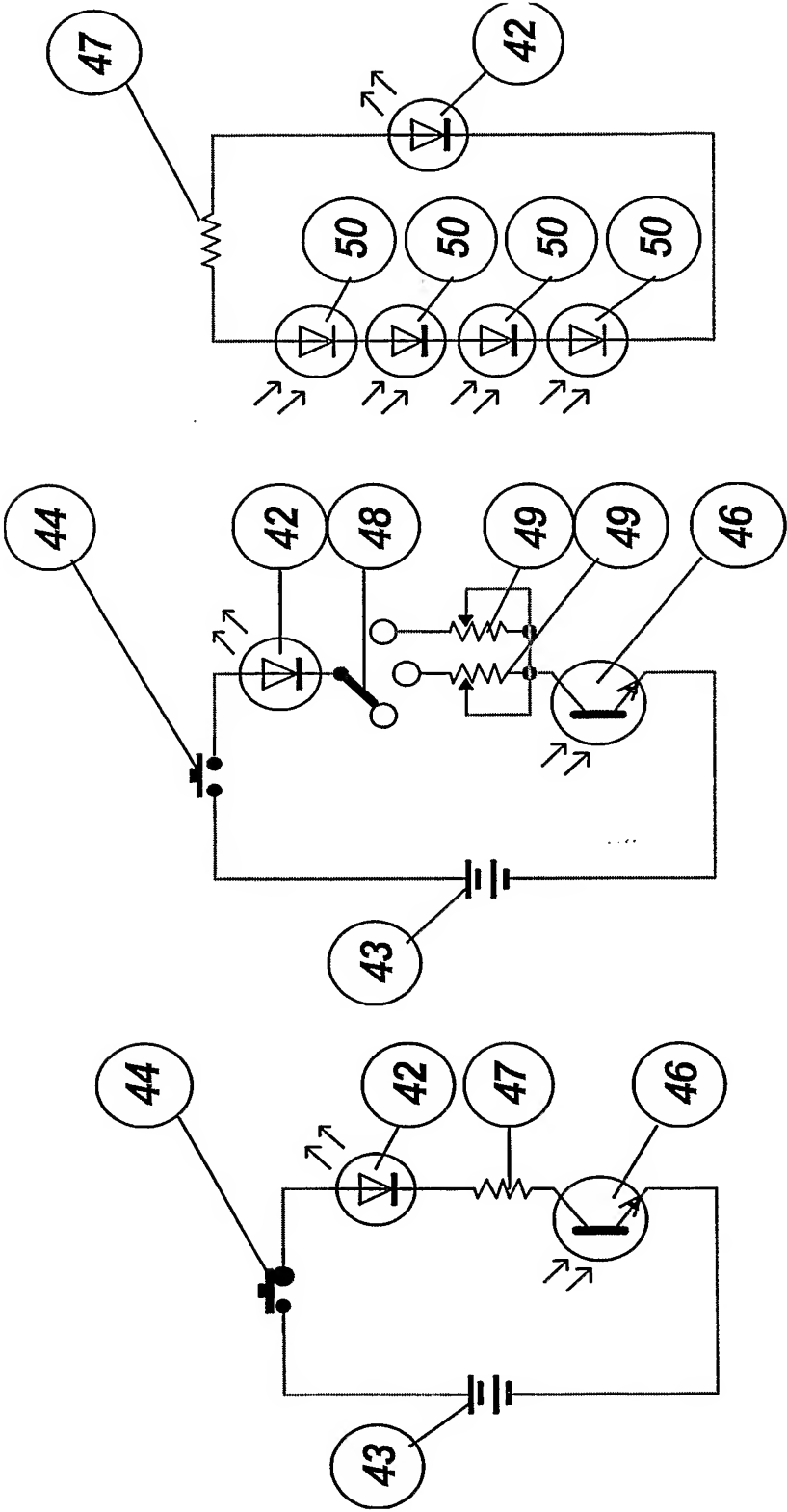
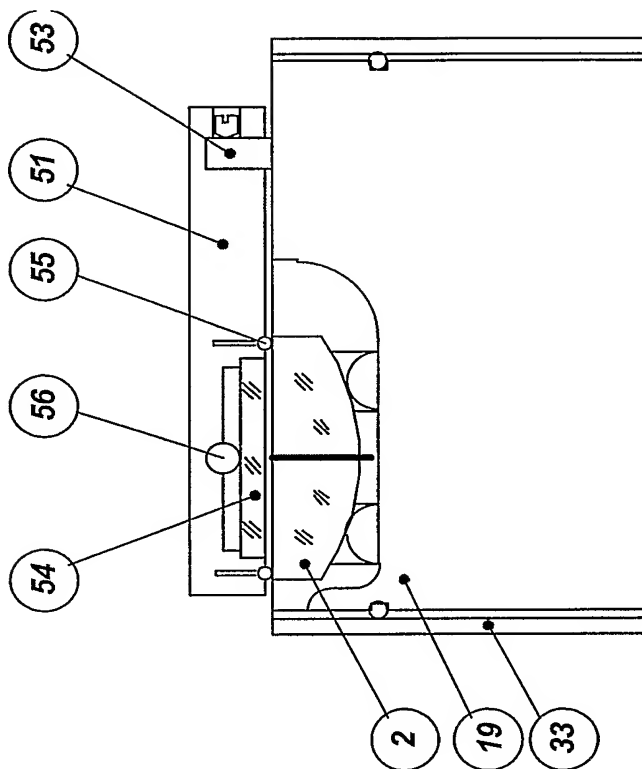
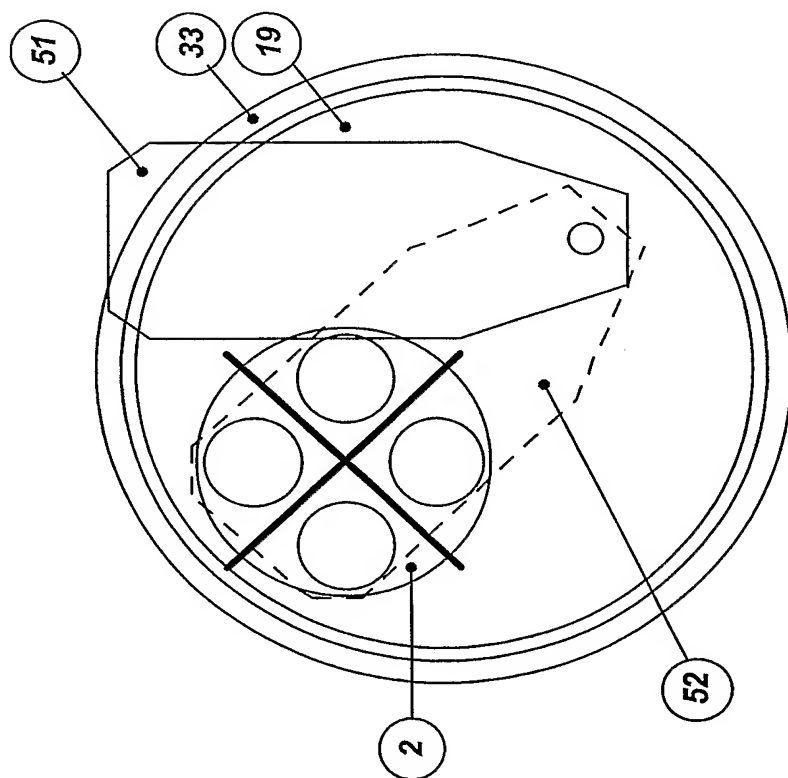


FIG. 9 d

FIG. 9 c

FIG. 9 b



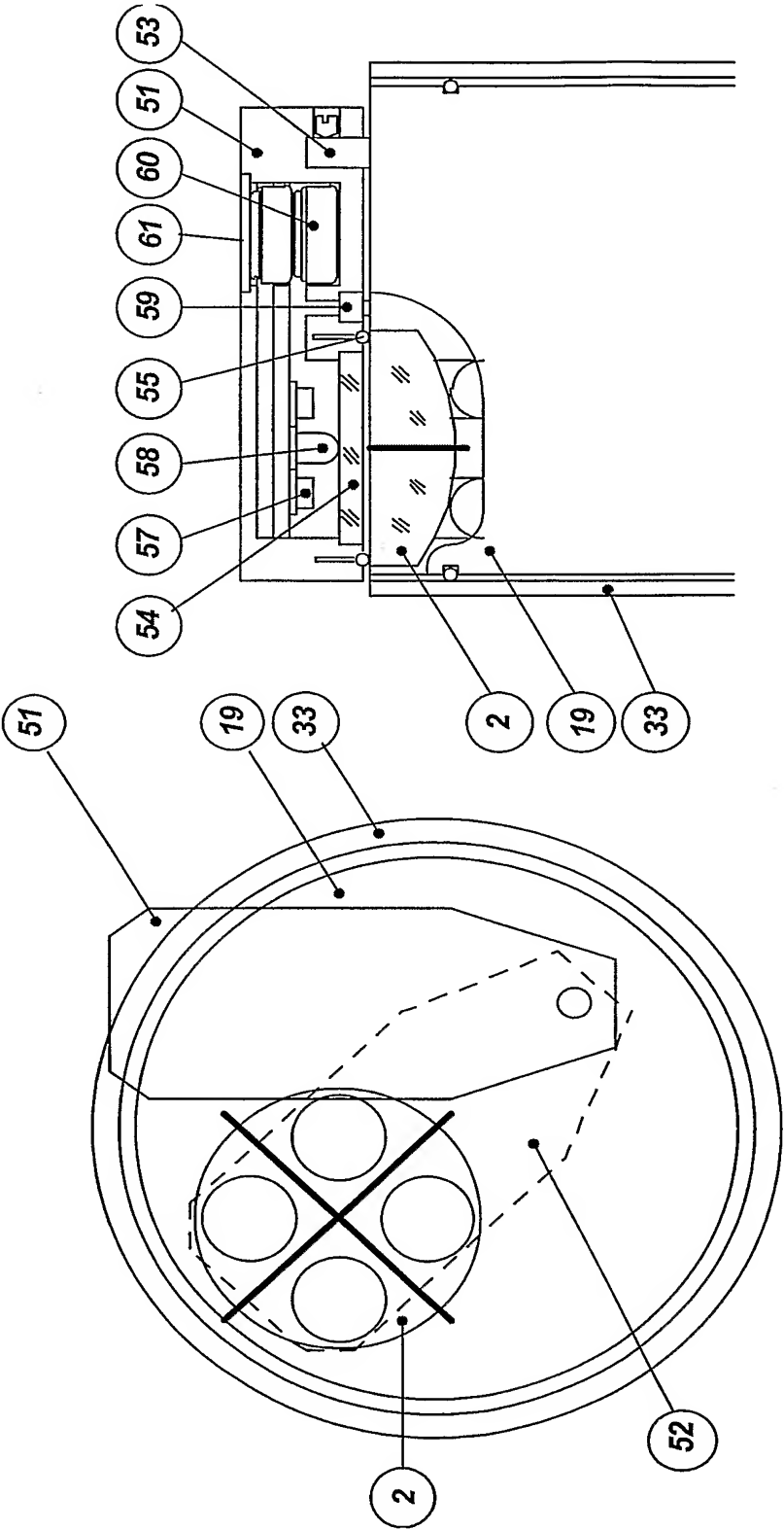


FIG. 11 b

FIG. 11 a

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US02/15717

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : G01N 21/64

US CL : 356/417

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 356/317, 318, 417; 250/458.1, 459.1, 461.1

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
Please See Continuation Sheet

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 4,084,905 A (SCHREIBER et al.) 18 April 1978 (18.04.78), see column 4, lines 15-22.	1-16, 31-43
A	US 5,929,453 A (ANDREWS et al.) 27 July 1999 (17.07.99), see Fig. 3.	1-16, 31-43
A	US 5,414,258 A (LIANG) 09 May 1995 (09.05.95), see the entire document.	17-30
A	US 5,689,110 A (DIETZ et al.) 18 November 1997 (18.11.97), see column 7, lines 28-44.	17-30

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T"

later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

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document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y"

document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&"

document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

09 July 2002 (09.07.2002)

Date of mailing of the international search report

05 NOV 2002

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

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Washington, D.C. 20231

Facsimile No. (703)305-3230

Authorized officer

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Telephone No. (703) 308-0956

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US02/15717

Continuation of B. FIELDS SEARCHED Item 3:

EAST

search terms: fluor\$, waterproof, underwater, calibrat\$

PUB-NO: WO003023379A1
DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: WO 3023379 A1
TITLE: MULTICHANNEL FLUOROSENSOR
PUBN-DATE: March 20, 2003

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OWEN CHRISTOPHER	US
SKIRDA ANATOLY	US
SLOBODYAN VIKTOR	US

APPL-NO: US00215717
APPL-DATE: May 17, 2002

PRIORITY-DATA: US31833801P (September 12, 2001)

INT-CL (IPC) : G01N021/64

EUR-CL (EPC) : G01N021/64

